Karen Ryan Named Interim Dean

Karen Ryan, associate dean for the arts, humanities and social sciences in the University of Virginia’s College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, has been named interim dean of the College. Ryan began her new assignment effective July 1, 2007.

Ryan joined the University faculty as assistant professor of Slavic languages and literatures in 1989 and became a full professor in 2002. She has been associate dean of Arts & Sciences since 2001. Ryan holds a bachelor’s degree from Cornell University and master’s and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Michigan.

Dr. Arthur Garson Named Executive Vice President and Provost

Dr. Arthur “Tim” Garson Jr., an internationally recognized pediatric cardiologist who has served as vice president and dean of the University of Virginia’s School of Medicine since 2002, has been named executive vice president and provost, effective July 1, 2007.

Garson, the James Carroll Flippin Professor in Medical Science, succeeds Gene D. Block, vice president and provost from 2001–2007. Block became chancellor of the University of California, Los Angeles this summer.

As provost, Garson will be the University’s chief academic officer, reporting to Casteen. He will direct the academic administration of the institution’s 10 schools, as well as the University Library, the University Art Museum, the University’s three residential colleges, public service activities and numerous University centers. He also will help oversee the creation of the University’s newest school, the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy.

Garson, 58, graduated summa cum laude from Princeton University in 1970 and received his M.D. from Duke University in 1974.
Dear Friends

IT WAS GREAT TO MEET SO MANY OF YOU during the recent Emeritus Society Weekend. Your affection for the College certainly has not waned, and your dedicated work to advance our school is most welcome. It is nice to know we value your support in this last year of great progress for the College. Construction is underway on the South Lawn Project — and its three buildings for History, Religious Studies, and Politics — and on Raiford Hall, a new home for Studio Art.

We’re in the early stages of new five-year IAPMA programs in public policy and public health. We have dedicated a new raiser in June, and this year awarded our first PhD. In music. Our overall undergraduate advising includes pairing entering students with faculty members in their field of interest. College Advising Seminars (fall 6-year classes that give students weekly access to their advisors). Second Year Seminars, and specialized-faculty advising fellows.

Lowering the student-faculty ratio remains one of our great challenges. By accepting more students every year for a decade while our faculty numbers have changed little, we find ourselves stretching in the wrong direction. Our aim is to increase the size of our tenured and tenure-track faculty across the College to 630 approximately 25 percent by 2015. Last year we hired 38 faculty members and this year have 10 searches under way, many of which are new, not simply replacing someone who has left. New faculty will allow us to reverse the student-faculty ratio trend. And that, of course, is essential to our ability to offer the intimate educational experience on which our reputation is built — an educational experience that, from what many of you have told me, is the cornerstone of the College experience.

Sincerely yours,

Karen L. Ryan
Interim Dean of Arts & Sciences
Professor of Russian

The South Lawn Project is a watershed project for the University in many ways, creating a literal bridge between a storied past and thrilling future. Thanks to the concerted efforts of all involved in the project’s design and construction, that future is looking greener every day.

The project will be among the first LEED-certified building efforts at U.Va. The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system has become the ultimate benchmark for green building in America, providing a “whole building” approach to sustainability. The system focuses on five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

The South Lawn Project and its focus on sustainability was the precursor to and one of the inspirations for this year’s new requirement from the Board of Visitors that all future University construction earn this designation.

The project, according to Architect for the University David Neuman, encompasses all aspects of LEED, from external environmental and building siting to construction materials and landscape plantings. The design itself is a teaching tool, exhibiting obvious sustainable elements in its water course, green roofs and operable windows.

However, while the LEED system is based on points that relate to a variety of levels rising from certification to silver, gold and platinum levels, there are more deeply rooted values at work. “From the very beginning, we decided we were not going to ‘buy’ LEED points,” said Adam Daniel, senior associate dean and CCO for Arts & Sciences. “We wanted to make sure that it would have a benefit for the program and that it would actually make sense for what we were trying to accomplish.”

The project benefits for the College are many, and varied, Daniel said. They include the literal connections for those interested in, for example, subjects such as environmental history or politics. And they include the physical advantages afforded by the increase in spaces for informal interaction as well as planned interaction. Finally, he said, the project addresses the desires and concerns of the community. “I think there was a sense pretty early on that this is something that was going to be important to our community. Students, I think, have been most vocal about this.”

New Cabell Hall Gets a New Lease on Life

The South Lawn Project is a shining example of sustainability as much for what goes up as it is for what does not come down.

In the case of New Cabell Hall — a 55-year-old building that holds the largest number of classrooms on Grounds — the process started with a careful study of the possibility of renovation rather than demolition and rebuilding.

“When one considered the disruption and cost of demolishing and replacing New Cabell, it was apparent that we needed to understand our options,” said University Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Leonard Sandridge. He explained that although New Cabell Hall does not meet expectations for an academic building by today’s standards, the building is well constructed and structurally sound.

“We found it was much less expensive to ‘buy’ LEED points,” said Adam Daniel, senior associate dean and CCO for Arts & Sciences. “We wanted to make sure that it would have a benefit for the program and that it would actually make sense for what we were trying to accomplish.”

The decision to renovate New Cabell significantly reduces the duration and amount of disruption that students, faculty and staff will experience compared to demolition and replacement,” Sandridge said. “The next step is to demonstrate to donors and the state that this is a smart investment for the future of the University.”

Finally, the choice became even easier to regret the ever-greening University mindset. “What we have here in New Cabell is 160,000 gross square feet of structurally sound, recently-roofed ‘work-horse-type’ space that may not fit everyone’s sense of aesthetics,” Neuman said, “but the embodied energy — materials, labor, etc. — is tremendous. The notion of putting it into a landfill is not sustainable to anyone who has looked at this choice with an open perspective.”

The deep sill in New Cabell Hall have long been a favorite place to study. The South Lawn Project will include green rooftops covered by living plant material.

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“We found it was much less expensive to bring New Cabell up to our standards than to tear it down and build a new one of equal size.”

The dollars and sense of the situation were quickly made clear. “It is a less costly option by more than one-third,” Architect for the University David Neuman said, “the difference between $80 million to renovate and $126 million to rebuild.”

The renovated building will have new plumbing, electrical, heating, communication and central cooling systems. The interior finishes will be comparable to the rest of the South Lawn Project and it will include a sprinkler system, improved accessibility and significant audio-visual upgrades.

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To honor the role of academic advising in the undergraduate experience at U.Va., a 2007 graduate, who wishes to remain anonymous, has made a $1.2 million gift to create the "Fund for Excellence in Advising," which will support both current programs within the system and future innovations. Stemming from the donor’s positive experience with the University's advising system, the fund will advance the level of engagement between undergraduates and their faculty advisors and expand students' opportunities for intellectual and personal discovery as they make decisions about their course of study and life beyond college.

The fund will build on the momentum begun several years ago, when then College of Arts & Sciences Dean Edward L. Ayers and several colleagues undertook a careful examination of the advising system to see what worked well for students and what could be improved. They found that first- and second-years in particular needed more than a brief, once-a-semester meeting with their advisors to review course selections before class registration.

A key feature of the fund is the Edward L. Ayers Advising Fellow Award, which recognizes Mr. Ayers' substantial contributions to transforming U.Va.'s advising system. Serving for a two-year term, the Ayers Fellow will assume a leadership role and, at the same time, maintain on-the-ground contact with students as an advisor.

The University's first Ayers Fellow is Paul Freedman, associate professor of politics and a veteran academic advisor.

Mr. Freedman expresses gratitude for the gift. "It has come along at the perfect time because it builds on the new programs and practices that we’ve established."

Mr. Ayers has strong praise for Mr. Freedman's contributions as a faculty advisor. "Paul Freedmen embodies what is best about U.Va.," he commented. "His remarkable dedication to his students is inspirational, and I couldn’t be more honored—or pleased—by his selection."

Much as Mr. Freedman enjoys his advising duties, he is realistic about what it takes. "It’s hard, sometimes draining work. But for him, the benefits far outweigh the costs. Whether he’s meeting with students singly or in groups, advising gives him insights and an understanding of the student experience that he may not get from the classroom. For colleagues less seasoned in advising, Mr. Freedman offers a simple tip. "To be an effective advisor, you need to listen more than you talk and ask the right questions."

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Dr. Arthur "Tim" Garrison Jr. is an internationally recognized pediatric cardiologist who has served as vice president and dean of the University of Virginia’s School of Medicine since 2002, has been named executive vice president and provost, effective July 1, 2007. Garrison, the James Carroll Flippin Professor in Medical Science, succeeds Gene D. Block, vice president and provost from 2001–2007. Block became chancellor of the University of California, Los Angeles this summer. As provost, Garrison will be the University’s chief academic officer, reporting to Casteen. He will direct the academic administration of the institution’s 10 schools, as well as the University Library, the University Art Museum, the University’s three residential colleges, public service activities and numerous University centers. He also will help oversee the creation of the University's newest school, the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy.

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